

# SAO TOMÉ AND PRINCIPE

# DHAPP

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS  
PREVENTION PROGRAM

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS  
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN  
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND  
BEYOND

## WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS

### BACKGROUND

#### Country Statistics

The estimated population of the Sao Tomé and Príncipe (formerly Congo-Brazzaville) is 206,000 people, with an average life expectancy of 68 years. Portuguese is the official language of Sao Tomé and Príncipe, which has an estimated literacy rate of 85%, unevenly distributed between men and women. This small, poor island economy has become increasingly dependent on cocoa since achieving independence in 1975. Cocoa production has substantially declined in recent years because of drought and mismanagement, but strengthening prices helped boost export earnings in 2003. The recent discovery of oil in the Gulf of Guinea is likely to have an impact on the country's economy. The gross domestic product per capita is \$1,600, with 54% of the population living below the poverty level.

#### HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in the Sao Tomé and Príncipe general population is estimated at 2.4%. Little is known about the numbers of people living with HIV/AIDS and risk factors in this small population.



#### Military Statistics

The Armed Forces of Sao Tomé and Príncipe (AFSTP) are estimated at 600 active-duty troops, with Army, Coast Guard, and Presidential Guard branches. Recently, the first strategic plan for HIV/AIDS prevention in the military was approved for 2006–2010.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

### **In-Country Ongoing Assistance**

The Johns Hopkins Cameroon Program (JHCP) has been providing technical assistance to the militaries of Central Africa, including Sao Tomé, in the implementation of HIV prevention and surveillance activities.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

### **Prevention**

During FY07, JHCP continued to work with the military in Sao Tomé in order to prepare the local team for implementation of selected activities. This process has been very slow due to lack of human resources dedicated to health in general and to HIV/AIDS in the military of Sao Tomé in particular. Plans have been made to initiate these activities by January 2008.

### **Proposed Future Activities**

DHAPP received a proposal from JHCP on behalf of the AFSTP for activities in FY07. It included the harmonization of key tools used for the intervention and evaluation of HIV/AIDS prevention programs in Central Africa sub region militaries (Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Sao Tomé, and Equatorial Guinea). Other plans included having representatives from the AFSTP attend a sub regional workshop in Cameroon with participation of military representatives from each of the aforementioned countries, and drafting sub regional strategic guidelines for HIV/AIDS prevention in the military.

